

Linguistic Landscape and language Planning

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Introduction

The aim of this paper is to consider Linguistic landscape as a language management strategy in relation to language planning policy. It also argues that linguistic landscape will not be beneficial unless it results in an additional value effect, as far as language promotion, maintenance, and dynamicity are concerned.

In fact, Management theory has come a long way since the days of Fredrick W. Taylor¹, often referred to as the father of Scientific Management. However, the most enduring orientation in management theory is founded on the philosophical insights of Henri Fayol, who is commonly referred to as the father of modern management theory (in Stewart and Dunkerly 1980:99).The management process school traces its ancestry to Henri Fayol, and its primary approach is to specify the management functions such as planning, organizing,

¹ Frederick Winslow Taylor, *The principles of Scientific Management* :
Forgotten Books,2010

The Principles of Scientific Management is a monograph published by Frederick Winslow Taylor first published in 1911. This influential monograph is the basis of modern organization and decision theory and has motivated administrators and students of managerial technique. Taylor was an American mechanical engineer and a management consultant in his years. He is also often called “the father of scientific management. His approach is also often referred to , as Taylor’s Principles or Taylorism (2010: vii)

commanding, coordinating, and controlling. The major tenet of the process school is that the analysis of management along functional lines allows the construction of a framework into which all new management concepts can be placed. Webb (2002: 281) in attempting to adapt the management theory to language observes that in general terms, “management can be described as the set of activities undertaken to ensure that the goals of an organization are achieved in an effective and efficient way”.

The term "language management" is used to refer to the activities, ways and steps, which are taken to deal with the language promotion issues. A language management agenda encompasses the status of the language candidate, its corresponding corpus planning and its spread. Language Management in terms of status planning seeks to deal with language legislation and language attitude. As regards corpus, it targets everything which relates to the language under focus namely the description of the language, the standardization, and instrumentalization. This has been termed “language cultivation”. The spread of the language encompasses both status and corpus and seeks to influence and dominate the linguistic landscape as well as the language used on the radio, on television, in the press, and in the various domains and workplaces.

Linguistic landscape henceforth (LL) refers to the words and messages displayed and exposed in public space. As regards Gorter (2006) and (Landry and Bourhis (1997), LL constitutes language which is all around us in textual form. It is the language that can be found for instance in indoor markets ,on shop windows, on commercial signs , on posters, on moving vehicles, on traffic signs ,on advertising , on billboards ,on street names , at place names , on commercial shop signs , and on public signs on government buildings etc. As regards Extra, G (2010:107) “Linguistic landscape has as its focus the public domains. In the

most literal sense, that is in terms of the visibility and distribution of language...”

In recent years, researchers have started to make a closer look and study the language texts that are present in public space. According to Gorter (2006:1) “linguistic landscape can be synonymous with or at least related to concepts such as “linguistic market”, “linguistic mosaic”, “ecology of languages”, “diversity of languages” or “the linguistic situation”. It is about the social context in which one or more languages are visible in a certain area.

Spolsky and Cooper (1991) in Gorter (2006:8) have the conviction that “Linguistic landscape functions as an informational marker on the one hand, and as a symbolic marker communicating the relative power and status of linguistic communities in a given territory”. Language is not used in public space at random; it is rather goal oriented as the messages it delivers are about society, people, the economy, policy, and identity. Language use in public space has its own rules and regulations, which either sustain or go against the declared policies; it can also be used for language awareness activity. In fact, it represents the practice of language beyond the school activity and authority.

The most central function of the LL is to serve as a marker of the geographical territory inhabited by a language community. The fact of using a language on public signs may also imply that the language in question is used to obtain services from public and private establishments. However, a feeling of exclusion can be experienced when the language of public signs is not matched by the ability to use it for obtaining services. LL also supplies information about the sociolinguistic situation of the community. The prevalence of one language rather than other mirrors the power and status of the competing language. The use or exclusion of one’s own language on public space impacts on how one feels as a member of a language community. Having

one's language present on private and public signs nurtures the feeling of value and status. LL participates to upkeep the community's social identity. The absence of the language from the LL leads to the devaluing of the community's language, weakens their attachment to the language, and eats away their collective motivation if there is any to act as active agent in the language enterprise. These are symptoms we see in our LL. LL is rather employed to market the French language. The majority of private space makes use of the French language rather than Arabic. French is used in indoor markets, on shop windows, on commercial signs, on posters, on moving vehicles, on advertising, and on billboards. The "linguistic landscape" in the public space serves as an important mechanism with which to regulate and develop language awareness in society. Language visibility can therefore be used to create and maintain power relations and collective identities.² Language visibility influences directly on linguistic vitality and cultural identity. As regards Jaworsky and Thurlow (2010) the substantial presence of language in the landscape serves as a marker for revitalization.

It is for these very reasons that the language profile of private signs and government signs must be organized to contribute to a friendly and coherent LL. Discordance with the government's profile will cause erasure when it comes to the policy planning efforts. LL represents by itself a political landscape for language policy implementation.

Levine (1991:137) reveals that the sign issue is symbolically explosive. Many Montreal francophone see anything short of unilingual French signs as the continuing legacy of the

² Extra, G (2010) Mapping the Linguistic Diversity in Multilingual Contexts: Demolinguistic Perspectives; In Joshua, A. Fishman 2nd (eds). Handbook of Language and Ethnic Identity: Disciplinary and Regional Perspectives, New York :Oxford University Press, (107-122)

‘conquest, while Anglophones view bilingual signs as a symbol that Montreal is a social contract between two linguistic communities. In short, the debate over Montreal’s French Face revolves around antithetical visions of the city: Montreal as a fundamentally French city versus Montreal as a dualistic city. In the case of Algeria, the “linguistic landscape” suggests a considerable gap between the official language planning policy which was set stressing the dominance of the national and official language, and the much higher tolerance towards French and English to a lesser extent. Language constitutes the decorum of public space together with the architecture, but it also serves as important explicit and hidden strategies to manipulate languages practices and attitudes.

LL is a fundamental showground for enforcement of language policy and creation of collective identity as long as it represents in the social environment the first contact we have with the language and the script of the place. Linguistic landscape is becoming part and parcel of our urban and even and to a certain extent of our rural aesthetic. Within this context it may be used to serve as a strategy of attraction and persuasion towards the language used. Because people socially identify with their environment, the interplay between language, and the visual discourse it triggers may constitute a semiotic resource.

LL participates also in enhancing the symbolic and cultural functions of language as it activates the process of language awareness through the constant interaction between the individual and the LL components. The individual reacts in a conscious or unconscious manner to the components which generate a response in the individual who receives it; even if the response takes a silent form through inner speech. Constant contact develops a certain sensitivity to the language displayed causing a kind of language processing. The print visual components of the LL contributes to a lexical visual storage which may be a kind of literacy practice in the case of children ,

in which case LL can serve within the social environment as a pedagogical reinforcing tool . LL can constitute one of the social agencies participating in language promotion and language marketing. For example, a billboard used for advertising has a twofold function: marketing of the product as well as the language used to present the product.

When it comes to language management and language planning policy, linguistic landscape occupies an important place in corpus planning activities. A language inevitably develops as a result of social, economic and historical processes, but a planned intervention as is the case of linguistic landscape constitutes an opportunity which enables language planners and policy makers to monitor and regulate the process on the basis of the desired goals. It may even constitute a way of caring for the health of language. Displaying language and selecting what to display constitute a case of language in contact which provides the opportunity to bring language closer to the users in a permanent way.

Linguistic landscape rises then, as a strategy to regulate the issue of language awareness together with spread among the different fractions of the population of a given speech community and its corresponding language(s). This should in fact motivate developing countries engaging in language planning policy to develop a linguistic landscape approach to reinforce their planning policy with such a management strategy.

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